



LEARNING NARRATIVE

YOUTH SELF-EMPLOYMENT

CAPABILITIES



Save the Children

Acknowledgments:

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Executive summary

Youth in Action (YiA) was a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with Mastercard Foundation. YiA worked to improve the socioeconomic status of out-of-school female and male youth between the ages of 12-18 in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda. This was achieved through a combination of non-formal educational and practical learning experiences, where youth learn foundational skills, such as literacy, numeracy, transferable life skills, financial literacy, work-readiness, and then applied their learning by selecting a livelihood pathway they want to pursue, such as enterprise development, vocational training, apprenticeship, or by returning to school.

Research Question and Methods

As part of YiA's learning agenda, this learning narrative was developed to answer the following question:

What improvements in self-employment capabilities did we observe in youth engaged in the YiA program?

Self-employment capabilities are defined as the knowledge, confidence and development of strategies to identify and sustain a micro- or small enterprise in safe and decent ways. This was tested through youth's knowledge and understanding of business planning, financial management and market analysis concepts, as well as youth's entrepreneurial mindset – a set of non-cognitive and contextually-based skills and behaviors that lay the foundation for youth enterprise development. Self-employment capabilities were also tested by how youth *apply* and demonstrate these skills, determined by what youth actively do to generate, manage, and sustain income for themselves and their family over time during and after the YiA program.

This narrative used a mixed-methods approach to review data, leveraging a series of qualitative and quantitative studies on youth's perspectives and self-assessments of their self-employment skills and work status. Studies were conducted at different stages of youth's involvement of the program – before YiA, directly after YiA and at least nine months after youth's involvement with YiA.

Findings

The findings indicate that there have been significant improvements to youth's self-employment capabilities through the YiA program. This specifically relates to improving youth's entrepreneurial mindsets, and building workplace teamwork and drive, as well as positive self-concept and self-confidence in young people's business pursuits. Youth also improved their market analytical, business planning, and financial management skills to equip them with the strategies to pursue enterprise opportunities in their local market.

YiA saw participants actively apply their self-employment skills to improve livelihood outcomes through the development and sustaining of enterprises at least nine months after they graduated from the program. Youth also demonstrated applying their self-employment skills by changing their spending and saving behaviors to reinvest and expand their enterprises, as well as diversifying their income-generating opportunities to take advantage of seasonal opportunities and/or develop higher value products and services along local agri-based value chains.

YiA is recognized for reaching one of the hardest to reach and most deprived target populations – working with out-of-school rural youth ages 12-18, who live outside key systems and services. This narrative highlights the value of building relevant, youth-friendly self-employment capabilities for this target group as a critical first step to engage in market systems and create positive pathways of change. Through building self-employment capabilities, the program has seen significant increases in youth's business income and the creation of sustainable enterprise strategies integrated in the community.

Strengthening youth's self-employment capabilities is found to be one aspect which contributes to positive shifts in youth's business control and decision-making power, and transforming family and community attitudes of female youth's status and economic participation. However discriminatory sociocultural norms and customs still influence youth's, specifically female youth's, economic opportunities. Self-employment capabilities is one key component to youth economic empowerment, however it is not a standalone piece and should be integrated into a holistic model, focused on improving youth's overall well-being, including positively transforming the relations and spheres of influence across a young person's life.





Background

1.1 Youth in Action Program

Youth in Action (YiA) was a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with Mastercard Foundation. The goal of YiA has been to improve the socioeconomic status of around 40,000 out-of-school young people (12-18 years), both female and male youth, in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda.

YiA's interventions were grounded in a Theory of Change (TOC), which organized the program's interventions, assumptions, and outcomes, and frames its approach to activities and learning. The TOC included three programmatic pillars: Youth Learn, Youth Act, and Youth Connect, and two cross-cutting themes: Participation and Partnerships. The model allowed YiA to support male and female youth to identify and explore livelihood opportunities through a combination of non-formal educational and practical learning experiences. For the majority of program participants, these opportunities were grounded in agricultural value chains or agri-business.

While there is a wide array of programs focusing on education for out-of-school youth or on youth employment, very few incorporate employability, social assets, literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, and real-life experience. YiA integrated all of the

above into a participatory learning cycle, designed to increase livelihoods opportunities through the acquisition of a broad spectrum of foundational and work-readiness skills.

The TOC was supported by a learning framework that outlined a set of defined and measurable research questions. The learning framework used a series of research questions as an organizing tool. These questions covered a range of subject areas relevant to youth livelihoods programming in rural Africa. In particular, this narrative focused on:

What improvements in self-employment capabilities did we observe in youth engaged with the YiA program model?

Working within this framework enabled YiA to continuously build and improve on evidence-based programming. The resulting learnings were organized into six subject matter-specific "Learning Narratives". It has been our hope that this series helps feed discussion of how to develop effective youth livelihoods programming for rural African youth.

This learning narrative focused on the Youth Act pillar of the YiA Theory of Change (TOC) to better understand how self-employment capabilities were learned and practiced across the full program model¹, as youth actively navigated and accessed their local markets and tested out their newly acquired skills and competencies. As youth moved through the program, they applied their learning in a pathway initiative, such as enterprise development, technical training, apprenticeship, or by returning to school. Youth also received peer-to-peer and community mentorship on the pathway they chose, and engaged in structured opportunities to further their agency, participation and ownership of the process, such as through advisory groups, peer-to-peer support networks, youth-led market assessments and procurement of business supplies.

Self-employment capabilities in YiA were defined as the knowledge, confidence and development of strategies to identify and sustain a micro- or small enterprise in safe and decent ways. This was tested through youth's knowledge and understanding of business planning, financial management and market analysis concepts, and building of youth's entrepreneurial mindset – a set of non-cognitive and contextually-based skills and behaviors that lay the foundation for youth enterprise development. Furthermore, self-employment capabilities were tested by how youth apply and demonstrate these skills, determined by what youth actively do to generate, manage and sustain income for themselves and their family over time during and after the YiA program.

1.2 Context of Youth Self-Employment

In Africa, there are approximately 226 million youth aged 15-24 years, accounting for 19% of the global youth population. By 2030, it is projected that this number will have increased by 42% (UN, 2015). This young demographic is also largely living at risk of extreme or moderate poverty, where the working poverty rates for youth equal nearly 70% in Sub-Saharan Africa (ILO, 2016). Youth employment is a fundamental challenge across the continent, where in 2016 the youth unemployment rate stood at 10.8% and the gender gap in youth labor participation is recognized as one of the highest in the world.² In countries and regions with high poverty levels, the youth employment challenge is as much a problem of *poor employment quality* as one of unemployment (ILO, 2016). While Africa has a relatively low regional youth unemployment rate, when linked to poverty this indicates that working is a necessity for many young people to survive. Informal, irregular, exploitative types of work are pervasive amongst young generations (ILO, 2013). This is increasingly the case for young females, who largely work in unpaid family work.

To better understand vulnerable employment for youth it is critical to look at employment trends in the Africa context. Fifty-three percent of the population in low-income countries and 36% in middle-income countries are self-employed, mainly in agriculture (Fields, 2014). However, self-employment does not indicate prosperous forms of work. Self-employment itself is a heterogeneous term defined as an employer



Figure 1. Spectrum of self-employment

¹ See Appendix A for a visual of the YiA model.

² See Appendix B for Gender Gaps in youth force participation rates, 2016

or 'own-account' worker and can be categorized into three types of self-employment: 1) constrained self-employment, 2) vocational self-employment and 3) transformational entrepreneurship, as highlighted in Figure 1.

Constrained self-employment is seen as a survival mechanism which individuals are forced to do out of necessity due to the lack of available and sufficient wage jobs and social protections. In many low-income contexts the goal of self-employment may focus on earning money for a period of time before transitioning to a more remunerative activity (Fields, 2014). Vocational self-employment relates to individuals who set up micro- or small enterprises focused on a specific existing vocation with viable market opportunities (for example, a carpenter who sets up a carpentry business to earn profits for him or herself), where they are integrated into local market and community systems. In many cases this can be a sustained community-based solution. Transformational or opportunity entrepreneurs have the intention and mindset to exploit a new idea with a focus on growing a business (Fields, Margolis & Gindling, 2014). Self-employment is often equated with entrepreneurship, however this can be misleading as entrepreneurship conjures the image of a risk-taker setting up a business with the intent to make it grow and prosper. The majority of self-employed in low- and middle-income countries are considered constrained ("working hard but working poor"), with a small amount being self-employed in vocational trades.

Skills mismatch on youth labor has been a major cause of youth unemployment and underemployment. Much of the skills taught in formal education settings do not match local market needs, nor provide relevant business and transferable life-skills required for young women and men to transition into the labor force (ILO, 2013). Furthermore, many countries with rapidly growing youth populations struggle to provide quality education systems, where there are major challenges of a high school dropout rate as well as poor literacy specifically for female and male youth in rural contexts (UN, 2015). In recent years, governments have put a focus on entrepreneurship education and training (EET) to support young people's self-employment and livelihood development. EET encompasses a heterogeneous array of interventions, including formal academic education

programs as well as stand-alone training programs to enhance business skills and entrepreneurial mindsets that are important for youth to participate in current or future enterprise activities (World Bank, 2013). EET interventions typically target tertiary education systems and older youth demographics (18+) and learning is facilitated through classroom-based training, business plan competitions and enterprise simulations. Common wrap-around services include mentoring and coaching to expose participants to innovation-driven entrepreneurs; however, there is limited analysis on the effects of other entrepreneurial support services outside of education and training services to sustain enterprises (World Bank, 2013).

Research has shown that students who participate in EET programs are more likely to exhibit business competencies (EC, 2012; Henry et al., 2005) and that such programs can help youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Wiger et al, 2015). This approach could be particularly effective in building the knowledge base and skill set of vulnerable populations; however, there are mixed and limited results in improving participants' self-employment status, performance, and overall youth employment. In a global study by Valerio et al. (2013) on the effects of EET, there was little evidence that such programs foster high-growth or high-employment firms in the long-term. Much of the existing literature on EET focuses on youth in formal educational settings (ILO, 2009; World Bank, 2013), such as schools. There is limited research and understanding of EET programs in informal education settings, specifically for the most deprived and marginalized youth populations, as well as youth below the ages of 18. This learning narrative aims to contribute to the literature on EET and youth economic development by exploring the experiences of out-of-school rural female and male youth between the ages of 12-18 in building self-employment capabilities through the YiA program.

1.3 Youth Self-Employment in Youth in Action

Youth's self-employment capabilities were developed throughout the entire YiA model. Within the Learning Phase, the program developed a comprehensive integrated curriculum, titled *Learning for Life*, involving four modules as described in Table 1 to build female and male youth's' entrepreneurial mindsets and foundational skills, such as functional literacy and numeracy, transferable life-skills, and financial literacy.

Module	Description	Length
Myself	Young people gain an understanding of their own capacities and interests and are able to draw upon this understanding to set goals and objectives.	45 hrs
My Family	Young people identify resources and capacity within their families and strengthen family relationships by contributing to family decisions and support systems.	45 hrs
My Community	Young people map resources, services and safe spaces, and strengthen relationships within their communities. Young people contribute to community development by solving a challenge identified by youth collectively.	50 hrs
My Business	Young people identify and assess income-generating opportunities in their local markets and develop a business plan and business and financial management strategies to pursue in the YiA Action Phase.	65 hrs

Table 1. Learning for Life curriculum overview

In YiA, an entrepreneurial mindset is defined as a contextually-based set of skills and behaviors that lay the foundation for youth enterprise development and their successful transition to decent work. An

entrepreneurial mindset is not a fixed trait, but can be learned, practiced and cultivated. Table 2 summarizes the key entrepreneurial mindset domains of focus in YiA.

Entrepreneurial Mindset Domains*	Description
Initiative & planning	Establishes business and financial plans; manages time and money effectively; adapts plans to meet goals.
Critical thinking & problem-solving	Synthesize information from a variety of sources; interpret information and draw conclusion; analyze and evaluate different points of view.
Future orientation	Can set goals for the future; prioritize long term success in the face of short-term gains; plan for a time horizon greater than one year.
Communication & Collaboration	Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively to individuals and groups; respect alternative points of view; work effectively in groups.
Opportunity recognition	Assess market to identify opportunities; identify problems as opportunities.
Creativity & innovation	Think of new ideas and solutions; willing to try new ideas and experiment.
Positive self-concept	Have self-confidence; self-reflect; value themselves and their work/business.

**Adapted from NFTE*

Table 2. YiA Entrepreneurial mindset framework

Another important aspect of self-employment capabilities was business planning, market analysis and management skills, which the *My Business*³ module specifically worked to build. Through the module, youth were introduced to agri-based value chains, including non-farming opportunities in their community, and learned how to lead their own market assessments to identify viable business ideas. Youth set business goals; analyzed business start-up and operating costs; and developed weekly budgets, seasonal calendars and tracking mechanisms to

plan and manage a business effectively. The word ‘business’ was used to represent micro- or small scale enterprises which were typically informal and recognized as an age-appropriate first step for many young people in African rural contexts.

Following the *My Business* module, youth developed a business plan for an identified viable income-generating opportunity to pursue in the YiA program. Youth then self-selected one of the five pathways⁴ as part of the Action Phase, described in Figure 2.



Figure 2. YiA pathways

³ The *My Business* module was adapted from Street Kids International's industry-recognized self-employment training resources delivered to marginalized adolescents and youth in over 60 countries.

⁴ It is important to note, at the beginning of YiA, all five pathways were considered for youth's selection; however, during Cohort 1 and 2 of the program it became evident that not all pathways were viable livelihood options for all country contexts, specifically the employment pathway. There were little to no employment options and trying to match youth with employers would not be feasible at scale and create false hopes amongst youth. Each country, through rapid market assessments, determined which pathways were feasible and age-appropriate and centred their efforts and resources on strengthening these pathway opportunities. All countries eliminated the employment pathway, however there were youth recorded in this pathway from Cohort 1 and 2. The pathway options provided for each country included:

- Burkina Faso – Apprenticeship, Enterprise Development
- Ethiopia – Enterprise Development
- Egypt – Apprenticeship, Enterprise Development, Return to School (12-14 only), Vocational Training
- Malawi – Apprenticeship, Enterprise Development, Vocational Training
- Uganda – Apprenticeship, Enterprise Development, Return to School, Vocational Training

Support to youth's pathway selection varied by country and involved a combination of:

- Structured classes using an additional *My Pathway* module to help youth understand the opportunities and limitations of the different pathway options available and make their selection
- Community-based support mechanisms, such as business review committees or panels made up of market actors, government officials, community leaders, and YiA staff, as well as parents in some cases. Using age-appropriate

criteria, committees assessed the feasibility, safety and viability of youth's business plans and provided constructive feedback for their pathway selection and enterprise development.

- Three-party agreement between youth, YiA and parents or caregivers to ensure proper use of funds and the commitment of parents or caregivers to youth's pathway development.

For all pathways, youth received a small grant which varied in size between YiA countries, as shown in Table 3.⁵

Burkina Faso	Egypt	Ethiopia	Malawi	Uganda
121 USD	98 USD	200 USD	90 USD	100 USD

Table 3. YiA grant breakdown by country

The enterprise pathway specifically focused on building self-employment capabilities through practice-based and real-life learning. Through this pathway youth developed business and financial management strategies as they experienced the opportunities and challenges in launching and operating a business, including: procuring goods and a working space; identifying and marketing to customers; record keeping and cash flow management; and reinvesting into their business for sustainability and growth. It is also important to note that self-employment capabilities can also have been practiced and strengthened in the apprenticeship and vocational training pathways, where youth launched enterprises during or following the pathway, as well as returning to school, where many youth pursued side income-generating activities to support their school costs.

Throughout the Action Phase, which varied from 2-4 months depending on the country, youth received additional wrap-around support services, such as peer and business mentorship⁶ and YiA follow-up coaching and post-distribution monitoring support. For some YiA countries, additional family, market and community mobilization activities were established, such as youth enterprise exhibitions, government and agriculture seminars, market fairs, media and sport events to encourage family, peer and community support of young people's livelihood development. Family and community support during the YiA program, specifically the Action Phase, was found to be critical for youth to successfully practice operating a micro- or small enterprise and building their self-employment capabilities.⁷

⁵ See Youth-Led Enterprise Development Narrative for further information on how the YiA grant was distributed and managed by youth

⁶ See the Mentorship Narrative for further information

⁷ See the Family & Community Contributions Narrative for further information

Building Self-Employment Capabilities for Very Young Adolescents (VYA)

The YiA program also customized a YiA model for VYAs, ages 12-14, in Uganda and Egypt. The Learning Phase for VYAs included a condensed curriculum, with adapted methodologies and content for a younger demographic. The Action Phase was adapted based on viable pathway options – specifically focused on youth returning to school or starting a micro-enterprise project. More in-depth analysis on possible enterprises ventures was taken to ensure they were suited to youth's age-based capabilities and not hazardous or exploitative in any way, through a technical committee trained on decent work and child working rights. In addition, for the 12-14 age cohort, mentorship and additional vocational training opportunities were organized for participants at the learning centers to ensure accessibility, specifically for female youth, whereas the older age groups meet with their mentors at vocational training centres.



1.3.1 Overview of Youth Enterprises in Youth in Action

Pathway Selection

Across the five YiA countries, the majority of youth – 86% (89% of female youth and 84% of male youth) – self-selected the enterprise pathway. A breakdown of the pathways selected for female and male youth in each country is provided in Table 4

	Burkina Faso		Egypt		Ethiopia		Malawi		Uganda	
YiA Pathways	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Enterprise	73.4%	75.0%	97.9%	96.1%	100.0%	100.0%	89.2%	82.0%	80.4%	66.0%
Apprenticeship	26.6%	25.0%	0.7%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	10.0%	15.3%	28.4%
Vocational Training	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	6.9%	0.3%	1.1%
Return to School	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	1.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	1.1%	3.9%	4.5%
Employment	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: September 2017 Monthly Monitoring Data

Table 4. Breakdown of youth selection of YiA pathways by country and gender

Reasons why youth chose the enterprise pathway vary from country to country, as well as by gender. As identified in rapid gender assessments and qualitative studies, the popularity of the enterprise development was largely because it was how young people themselves, as well as their parents or caregivers and communities, envisioned economic growth opportunities given the rural context and limited services and resources available. Youth also perceived the enterprise pathway as a rewarding and empowering livelihood opportunity, which created a positive image of youth within their families and community and gave them flexibility and power to achieve their goals. The enterprise pathway was identified as one of the most age-appropriate pathways for very young adolescents and youth ages 12-18, which was seen as a stepping stone for youth to practice and expand upon what they have learned and experienced.

Female youth specifically were attracted to the enterprise pathway as it allowed them more flexibility to be closer to the household to fulfill other domestic responsibilities, including caring for their own children or siblings, cooking and daily household

management. Across all YiA countries, it was found that female youth have very limited mobility largely due to concerns of social interactions with males in public spaces, and remain idle in the household in unpaid household work. The enterprise pathway allowed female youth to take on productive work and receive emotional as well as financial support from family members in their economic pursuits. It is important to note, that while youth were self-selecting the pathway they wanted to pursue in the program, livelihood opportunities for youth at this age demographic are highly influenced by family members, as well as the social norms of what is acceptable for female and male youth to do.

Types & Structure of Youth Enterprises in YiA

Findings from the quantitative tracer studies indicated, overall, youth engaged in agri-based micro- or small enterprises. The types of enterprises which youth worked in before and after YIA vary largely by country and gender; however, through the YiA program it was found many were shifting the types of agri-based enterprises they pursued. In

general, the trend was that after YiA fewer youth were solely focused on agriculture production and farm-based work, and instead pursued higher-value enterprises such as trading and processing or auxiliary and service-based enterprises related to agriculture value chains in their local markets.

The studies also revealed that there were certain types of work and contexts which see equal engagement of female and male youth, such as agriculture trading and animal rearing and trading in the majority of contexts with some exceptions. Nevertheless, in each country there was also clear gender-segregated work that female and male youth engaged in both before and after YiA. Much related to stereotypical types of work for females and males, which favors more lucrative opportunities for males. A detailed breakdown of the different types of enterprises youth were engaged in by gender and country is provided in Appendix C. Other findings from qualitative studies revealed that the geographical location in rural contexts greatly impacted the types of businesses youth pursued. For instances, in Malawi, there was more diversification of activities in villages closer to urban centers with better road and transportation means. In more

remote and inaccessible villages work was largely focused on agriculture production for necessity, especially for female youth.

In terms of how micro- and small enterprises were structured in the YiA program, the majority of youth, as well as their family members, preferred to launch individual enterprises over group enterprises. This is largely the case for female youth, where mixed-gender group dynamics were perceived to make it difficult for female youth to have a voice and lead in how a business operated. Families also preferred to contribute to individual enterprises where they would solely benefit from the enterprise yields. Both female and male youth also indicated that individual enterprises allowed for a more flexible model allowing them to alter or diversify their operations based on identified seasonal and market opportunities, which group businesses with strict constitutions and by-laws did not allow. There were some cases where youth organized themselves in groups of two or more to increase their capital or share resources such as renting agriculture land or equipment to launch a business. Group enterprises were largely set up between siblings and blood relations.



Design and Methodology

This learning narrative is a review of studies and reports conducted by Save the Children and its partners to consider different aspects of self-employment within YiA.

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of this review are to better understand the results of a series of studies that looked at self-employment as experienced by youth implementing small businesses across five countries in Africa. The specific objectives of Save the Children's research in this area were to:

- Provide like-minded NGOs, youth affiliated institutions and the wider public with a thorough and reliable knowledge base on self-employment capabilities within YiA.
- Identify best practices, challenges and key lessons learned from YiA's experience with self-employment, and thereby provide valuable insights and recommendations for future youth programming initiatives.

2.2 Research Question

The primary research question for this learning narrative was:

What improvements in self-employment capabilities did we observe in youth engaged with the YiA program model?

2.3 Data Sources⁸

Program Outcome Studies (POSs): A pretest and post-test survey was administered across all YiA country programs to understand how youth work-readiness outcomes (financial literacy, work support and resources, foundational academic skills and transferable life-skills) changed for a sample of youth over the eight-to-ten month program period, and how those changes impacted their socioeconomic outcomes (income earning status, adequate savings and adequate credit access).

Quantitative Tracer Studies: A retrospective study of a sample of youth who graduated from the YiA program at least nine months before data collection. The study was completed in four of the five YiA countries – Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia and Uganda. Youth respondents were asked a set of self-assessment questions that required them to reflect on their socioeconomic and livelihood status before starting YiA and at the present moment.

Country-Specific Qualitative Studies: A series of qualitative studies developed and customized for each country addressing one or more of the YiA key research questions in the TOC:

- **Ethiopia Qualitative Tracer Study – Role of YiA in Long-term Livelihood Development of Rural Ethiopian Youth:** 24 gender-separated focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted to understand youth's perspectives on how their participation in YiA affected their livelihood opportunities at least nine months after YiA. The study focused on the changes in youth's work status, and how and why youth made specific post-YiA livelihood decisions.
- **Malawi Qualitative Tracer Study:** 20 FGDs conducted with youth to understand youth's perspectives on how their participation in YiA influenced their livelihood opportunities and participation in their families and communities at least nine months after YiA.

⁸ See Appendix D for a summary of the data sources' samples sizes and date of completion.

- **Uganda Qualitative Tracer Study:** Six gender-separated FGDs conducted with youth ages 14-18, who had graduated from YiA at least nine months or more before the research was conducted. The overall study focused on understanding youth's experiences through the mentorship program, however a series of additional FGDs were also conducted to understand youth's perspectives on the changes they experienced to their self-employment capabilities and livelihood opportunities through their participation in YiA.

Save the Children University Partnerships for Education & Research (SUPER) Studies and Cross-Country Exchange Studies: A series of studies conducted as part the SUPER program and between YiA country staff to support ongoing monitoring and learning in the YiA program:

- **Documenting the strengths and challenges of youth entrepreneurship education, Burkina Faso:** 22 FGDs (10 FGDs with youth only) conducted to understand what youth, families and community members considered important self-employment skills and how they viewed business education and training delivered through YiA.
- **Gender-sensitive program practices to encourage youth agency, Egypt:** a mixed methods study including 400 surveys administered and eight gender-separated FGDs with youth, as well as eight gender-separated FGDs were conducted with youth's parents or caregivers. Each FGD included between seven-to-nine participants. The objectives of the study were to share: program knowledge on successful strategies to promote adolescent female youth' participation; recommendations on how to apply a gender-transformative approach to education and livelihood programming, and changes in community perceptions of female youth and their livelihood development through YiA.
- **Understanding youth self-employment and entrepreneurship skills, Ethiopia:** A qualitative research study involving FGDs and in-depth interviews with YiA youth sampling participants of both genders, different ages and stages of the YiA program.
- **Uganda Group Enterprise Study:** FGDs conducted with youth and relevant stakeholders (local government bodies, parents or caregivers, facilitators and program staff) to gain experiential learning on group and individual enterprise approaches and provide recommendations on most effective strategies and processes for the enterprise pathway.

Program Monitoring & Reporting: Monthly monitoring of youth participants who enrolled and graduated in the program, including pathway selection, distribution of cash grant, etc. for each country; and quarterly reporting of progress made by each country, including programmatic changes and lessons learned during implementation.

2.4 Limitations

Youth perception-based responses: A broad limitation is that the main data sources - the POS and Tracer studies – relied on variables self-reported by youth. There were no objective indicators of those variables. The data may therefore not be fully accurate if youth responded either in an overly positive or overly negative way. However, when analyzing the results it was found that youth did not seem to respond in a systematically positive or negative way. Their responses varied depending on the content of the questions asked, and so there is greater confidence in the quality of the responses. This indicates that the data sources provide a reasonably objective picture of YiA youth.

Retrospective study: The quantitative and qualitative tracer studies relied on retrospective information on youth's perceptions of their socioeconomic and livelihood status at two different points of time, where it can be hard to remember specifics such as daily income, work activities, family support or mentor interactions from months or years prior. This limits the precision of findings. Youth's reported changes in daily income are particularly subject to imprecise measurement. Data is available on income prior to YiA from less than half the sample, so the ability to detect a relation between gains in income and sociodemographic characteristics, months after completing YiA, is limited. Likewise, there is no detailed information available about the specific week or month that youth had in mind when they responded, so data cannot be adjusted for fluctuations in currency or in youths' wages. It is assumed that

youth reported on their average daily income in the weeks/months immediately prior to YiA. Furthermore, youth may have an incentive to report larger gains than they actually experienced in order to signal their interest in participating in future types of livelihood programs. On the other hand, this incentive could work in the opposite direction, youth may be inclined to report smaller gains to signal that they are in need of continued support from programs like YiA.

No comparison or control group: The data collected for these studies come from youth who participated in YiA and there were no comparison or control groups to analyze what youths' outcomes would have been in the absence of YiA. It cannot be attributed what the gains youth reported are due to their participation in YiA. Youth are generally expected to develop more skills, assets, and income as they mature, regardless of intervention.

Sample Size for Socioeconomic Variables:

In the POS, there was a small sample size for the pretest and post-test gains for the socioeconomic outcomes. The majority of youth (between 75-90% of youth) reported that they were not working before YiA. This statistic matches the expectations from data on the pre-program market assessments and discussions with the country teams that a large proportion of the sample would not report working during the pretest data collection. The fact that more than half of the youth in the country samples reported working at post-test is, in itself, an indication of the positive effect of YiA. However, the low work rate at pretest means there is not sufficient data on the change in socioeconomic outcomes between pretest and post-test. This restricted the POS analysis, which could not fit models predicting the change in socioeconomic outcomes and could only predict the post-test levels of youth's socioeconomic outcomes.

Save the Children conducted interviews and focus groups:

Two limitations should be noted a/ respondents' potential conservative response bias when interacting with Save the Children staff, which could cause participants to potentially refrain from revealing problems/issues and only respond positively to critical questions and b/ potential organizational biases from the survey team, which could, in some instances, make the findings less objective and consequently less informative. The fact that Save the Children conducted the research internally could have inhibited the development of fresh ideas and perspectives.

Because of these reasons listed above, there is a limited amount that can be stated of YiA causing changes in youth outcomes. Rather, findings represent the *role of YiA in strengthening youth self-employment capabilities from the perspective of YiA youth themselves.*



Review of Evidence

3.1 Youth significantly improved their entrepreneurial mindsets and business skills

Youth in Action saw significant improvements in female and male youth's entrepreneurial mindsets and essential business skills from before and after their participation in the program. This is indicated through assessing youth's workplace teamwork and drive in the POS, business planning and financial management skills in the quantitative tracer studies, as well as through focus group discussions and interview discussions in various qualitative tracer and learning studies.

3.1.1 Increased in workplace teamwork, drive, and confidence in enterprise development

In the POS, workplace teamwork and drive analyzed youth's motivation for working independently and ability to work well as part of a team. This also included looking at youth's level of goal setting abilities and interest in learning relevant or new skills. The workplace teamwork and drive scale was the sum of youth's responses to four questions and the scale was defined on a 1-3 scale. Youth with a mean score lower than 2.5 were considered to have inadequate workplace teamwork and drive; youth with a mean score of 2.5 or greater had adequate workplace teamwork and drive. Results revealed:

- A 41% increase in workplace teamwork and drive in Egypt from 56% at pretest to 79% at post-test. The average youth moved from having inadequate to adequate workplace teamwork and drive.
- In Ethiopia, the percent of youth who reported having adequate workplace teamwork and drive increased by 130% from 35% at pretest to 80.5% at post-test.
- Malawian youth reported small improvements, with an increase from 82% at pretest to 85% at posttest. However the model effect size of nearly zero (.01) indicates these results had practical significance.
- A 23% increase in Ugandan youth who reported having strong workplace teamwork and drive from 70% at pretest to 86% at post-test.

In all four country studies there were no differences in the gain of workplace teamwork and drive scores by sex, age or household wealth.

Various YiA qualitative studies also highlighted how youth had improved key aspects of their entrepreneurial mindset, such as improving their positive self-concept, future orientation, opportunity recognition, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. Youth reported the YiA program empowered them to pursue their own livelihoods by strengthening their self-confidence in enterprise development. In the Egypt SUPER study, one female youth indicated: *"I became a different person than what I would have without YiA."* Another participant explained: *"It was like we weren't living before. It was like we were born again."* Self-confidence was seen as a key element to help them develop and plan for their own career goals and problem-solve challenges which stood in the way of achieving those goals. From the Ethiopia qualitative tracer study, a female youth from the Habru woreda [district] described: *"Before I joined Youth in Action program I was sitting idle with my parents as a dropout. But as soon as I joined the Youth in Action program I started to think about whom I am and what I should do for my future."* The development of goals and envisioning a better future was also articulated in the Egypt SUPER study, where youth described learning not to give up easily when pursuing their goals. Family members have also observed changes in their children's ambitions. As one father explained in Egypt: *"Youth didn't know they could be something until now."*

Through YiA, youth also described being able to appreciate the resources within their community and recognize their own potential and opportunities. Youth expressed optimism about the opportunities for a better life from their parents. An Ethiopian youth participant from the Gedober Kebele [village] noted that he used to be impatient and easily agitated. Since he joined the YiA program, he claimed that his behavior changed. He proudly said: *"I can now peacefully communicate with my family and peers... I wasn't like this at all. I think the program has changed me."* In addition, he declared that he had learned to be strategic when making decisions instead of acting based on emotion alone. In all the three woredas and kebeles, YiA youth

acknowledged that the YiA program had benefited them in many ways including self-awareness, personal development, perseverance, flexibility, self-care, and respecting others.

Similar findings were also revealed in the Burkina Faso SUPER Study. Youth in FGDs cited YiA as a primary reason for their increased self-confidence and new tendency to see opportunities where others might see insurmountable problems. This suggests that the focus on transferable life-skills and development assets – along with technical skills and competencies – have made an observable mark in the lives of YiA participants. For instance, the ease with which youth recalled specific takeaway lessons from the “My Self” and “My Community” modules of the Learning Phase, indicated the positive effect of the *Learning for Life*

curriculum to heighten youth’s attitudes and mindsets. Through YiA, youth felt empowered to explore their interests with curiosity, and to step out of their comfort zones. Table 5 below shows the competencies that were discussed and the total number of focus groups in which the participants brought them up. In the FGDs, youth participants prioritized competencies that had to do with relationships. For instance, interpersonal skills were generally seen as valuable because they would enable youth to work well in teams, treat their customers respectfully, and improve their relationships with their families and other community members. Similarly, adults and youth alike emphasized the value of learning from more experienced people, which would require, among other things, the ability to listen, observe, ask questions, and seek advice.

Competency	Frequency
Interpersonal skills	15
Learning from others (through observation, seeking advice)	14
Self-confidence and courage	12
Focus	8
Positive thinking	5
Vision	5
Passion	4
Decision-making	3

Table 5. Competencies as described by youth in Burkina Faso SUPER Study

3.1.2 Improved market analysis, business planning and financial management skills

Another element of the skills associated with self-employment capabilities is youth’s business skills, understood as their ability to analyze and identify

market opportunities; develop a business goal and plan, and manage money for their business. To assess self-reported business skills, youth were asked if they knew how to do a series of eight activities as described in Table 6 in the quantitative tracer study.

Market Analysis & Business Planning	Create a business plan
	Identify customers and competitors for a business
	Plan a business for different seasons
	Decide the best price at which to sell an item
Business Financial Management	Identify places to get money to start or grow a business
	Budget money for your business and personal life
	Identify how much money you need to start a business
	Track how much money you were spending and on what

Table 6. Activities to assess youth market analysis, business planning & financial management skills

Overall, youth had significant positive perceptions of the business skills they gained through their participation in YiA. Prior to YiA, less than half said they knew or were able to create a business plan, identify customers, plan for seasonal changes, make price decisions, identify start-up capital sources, budget or keep records. After YiA, for each skill asked, more than

88% felt competent. The number of business skills youth reported being able to do prior to YiA was between 1.60–3.02, compared to between 6.89–7.54 after YiA. Burkina Faso and Egypt saw increases in skills of 255% and 281% respectively after YiA. Overall changes are highlighted in Table 7.

Percent who respond “agree or strongly agree” when asked if they know how to...	BURKINA FASO		EGYPT		ETHIOPIA		UGANDA	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Create a business plan	13%	81%	17%	90%	19%	92%	37%	97%
Identify customera and competitors for a business	25%	86%	14%	88%	19%	93%	36%	94%
Plan a business for different seasons	20%	88%	18%	89%	29%	94%	43%	93%
Decide the best price at which to sell an item	35%	92%	29%	92%	43%	97%	45%	96%
Identify places to get money to start or grow a business	23%	82%	18%	87%	35%	96%	38%	93%
Budget money for your business and personal life	23%	84%	15%	93%	33%	97%	34%	94%
Identify how much money you need to start a business	30%	90%	21%	93%	42%	96%	34%	95%
Track how much money you were spending and on what	25%	85%	29%	91%	38%	96%	34%	92%
Number of entrepreneurial activities (of 8)***	1.94	6.89	1.6	7.2	2.6	7.6	3.02	7.54
% change	+255.15%		+281.25%		+192.31%		+149.67%	
Sample size	204		487		382		494	

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Table 7. Business skills before and after YiA, across four YiA countries

There were no significant differences in reported skills between male and female youth before or after in Egypt or Uganda. In Ethiopia, male youth reported slightly more skills than female youth before YiA (2.8 compared to 2.3 respectively), however there were no significant differences between genders observed after YiA which indicates the program has contributed to reducing a gender gap in Ethiopia related to skills and business competencies. In Burkina Faso, male youth reported slightly more skills than female youth after YiA (7.1 compared to 6.6), which indicates that a gender gap still remains.

In the case of Uganda, where there were three prevalent pathways for youth to pursue – enterprise, vocational training and apprenticeship – an analysis was completed to determine the association between the YiA pathway youth chose and their reported business skill outcomes. Interestingly, youth who selected the vocational training or apprenticeship pathways reported slightly higher gains in business skills compared to youth who selected the enterprise pathway. This association was small in magnitude, representing only one additional skill gained; however, this highlights that these pathways had similar positive effects on improving youth’s business skills and overall self-employment capabilities.



In Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda qualitative tracers, youth indicated that the facilitators and mentors were influential in helping them understand and recognize business opportunities in their communities and widen their business knowledge, specifically on record keeping, business and financial management and customer care. Furthermore, youth reported having learned to manage their incomes to buy personal items and invest in growing their businesses.

- *“Before giving us startup support, we were trained on how to handle the income and profits from our businesses. This has helped us use our capital to expand our businesses”* – Female youth, Uganda, 14-18
- *“In YiA, we were told to always record debtors so that we can follow them up to pay. Before, we would not do this and some customers would take items on credit and never pay.”* – Female youth, Uganda, 14-18
- *“To start from the grassroots, I started to save money from what I got in any circumstances. Then, I started a small shop using one room in my family’s house. Through time, I added oil and sugar retailing and sheep fattening. Now, I run three businesses of my own due to the business knowledge I acquired and financial and technical supports from the program and from my family.”* – Female youth, Ethiopia, 15-18

In the Ethiopia qualitative tracer study, male and female FGD participants from all of the woredas reported the business and financial management skills they learned through YiA helped them make important decisions for their enterprises. Because of YiA, youth learned how to make business plans, which helped them choose how to invest their money and grow a business. Youth also acknowledged YiA for teaching them how to leverage people in their community who could provide them additional technical knowledge and skills for the specific business trades they were pursuing.

3.2 YiA youth actively applied skills learned to improve their livelihood outcomes

Through YiA’s practice-based learning opportunities youth were able to apply their skills to strengthen their overall self-employment capabilities as well as their livelihood outcomes. This application can be seen when looking at three key application areas:

1. Youth’s economic participation, specifically youth’s change in work and business ownership status.
2. Youth’s spending and saving behavior, such as how youth are reinvesting in their enterprises and using their savings and profits.
3. Youth’s diversified business strategies.

3.2.1 Improved active economic participation

YiA significantly contributed to improving youth's work activities and sustained business ownership at least nine months after graduating from YiA, as indicated from the quantitative tracer studies.

Burkina Faso:

- 32% of youth said they were working⁹ before YiA, and 87% said they were currently working (171.88% increase).
- 26% reported owning a business prior to YiA, compared to 75% who reported owning a business nine months after YiA (188.46% increase).
- There was no difference between female and male youth who worked or owned a business before or after YiA.

Egypt:

- 32% of youth said they were working before YiA, and 87% said they are currently working (171.88% increase).
- 4% reported owning a business prior to YiA, compared to 77% who reported owning a business after YiA (584.62% increase).
- Male youth were more likely than female youth to report working before YiA (53% compared to 13%, respectively), however at least nine months after YiA this gender gap had been reduced substantially, where after 85% of female youth were working and 90% of males were working; an increase of 554% for females, as indicated in Figure 3. Improvements in male youth's economic participation is also noted, however in qualitative studies and the rapid gender assessment, male youth are more exposed to the market. This suggests a positive transformation in the valuation and economic activities of female youth through the YiA program in the Egypt context.

Ethiopia:

- 50% of youth reported working before YiA, while 96% said they are currently working (92% increase).

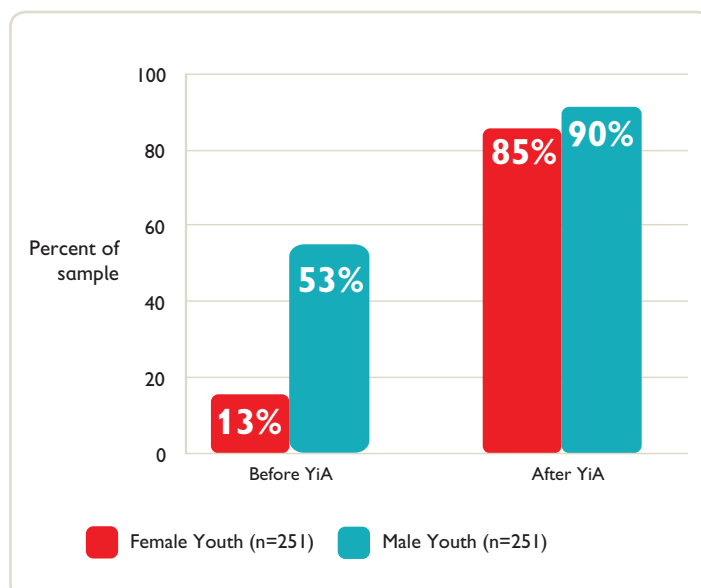


Figure 3. Percent of male and female youth working before and after YiA, Egypt

- 28% reported owning a business prior to YiA, compared to 89% who reported owning a business now (217.86% increase).
- Before YiA, 58% of male youth worked compared to 43% of female youth, a difference of 15%. This gap mostly closed after YiA, but there remains a difference between the percent of male youth versus female youth who reported working of 99% and 94% respectively.
- There was no difference between male and female youth in terms of percent who reported owning a business.

Uganda:

- 64% of Ugandan youth said they were working before YiA, while 94% said they were currently working (46.88% increase).
- 63% reported owning a business prior to YiA, compared to 85% who reported owning a business now (34.92% increase).
- Interestingly, more female Ugandan youth reported owning a business both before and after YiA compared to males, which could possibly be contributed to female youth's household productive responsibilities in the Uganda context as young mothers managing a household.

⁹ "Work" is defined as any activity that youth did for themselves, their family, or for someone else for which they received some kind of payment. This payment may have been money, or some other type of payment like food or things.

It is important to note, the qualitative tracer study was a retrospective study of youth participants who graduated from the YiA program at least nine months before data collection. This suggests that youth's work activities and business activities were sustainable livelihood endeavours, where it can be concluded that the knowledge and skills youth gained through YiA – such as workplace drive, teamwork, confidence and business skills – were significant factors to youth's work and enterprise sustainability. It is important to highlight that self-employment capabilities are only one factor contributing to youth's economic participation. The complete package of foundational skills as part of the YiA model, as well as support such as cash grants, mentorship and family and community contributions, also played significant roles in youth's economic participation as indicated in YiA's other learning narratives.

3.2.2 Improved spending and saving behaviors for enterprise reinvestment and expansion

One of the key indicators that youth are applying the self-employment skills they learned is through their change in behaviors on spending and saving. The quantitative tracer studies¹⁰ revealed major changes to the percentage of money that youth contributed to the start or growth of their micro- or small enterprise.

Burkina Faso saw a greater percentage of youth spending money they earned on *contributing to a business* after YiA (58%) than before YiA (37%), a change of 57%. Youth were also more inclined to contribute to the family after YiA (43%) than before YiA (23%). When it comes to saving practices, before YiA only 42% contributed their savings to their business, which increased to 70% after YiA. There were no differences in spending or saving practices between male and female youth.

Egyptian youth reported substantial changes in saving and spending behavior. In terms of spending practices, a greater percent of youth reported spending money on *contributing to a business* after YiA (56%) than before YiA (7%). Before YiA, there was no difference in reported spending practices between male and female youth. However, after YiA, female youth were more likely than male youth to report *spending money on their*

business, which makes sense considering more female youth than male youth reported owning a business. Meanwhile, male youth were more likely to report spending money on *personal needs, contributing to family and other*. As indicated in qualitative studies in Egypt, parents and caregivers were a key influence in how young female and male youth spend their money. For female youth, families wished them to focus on business and be empowered before they get married. Many mothers expressed that they: “do not want my girl to be like me,” and encouraged their daughters to spend their money for their business, as well as save money for their dowry. However, for sons, there were high expectations to spend profits and additional money to support the family, as part of a male's breadwinner responsibilities. Regarding savings, youth used the money they saved primarily to *contribute to their own business* (especially after YiA), to family and for personal needs. Before YiA there was no difference between how male and female youth spent the money they saved. After YiA, male youth were more likely than female youth to spend their savings on *contributing to their business* (27% versus 11%).

In Ethiopia, in terms of spending practices, a greater percentage of youth reported spending money on contributing to a business, after YiA (75%) than before YiA (46%), and a greater percentage said they did not spend the money they earned (9% before and 18% after YiA), which indicates applying self-control and delayed gratification. Youth in Ethiopia also used the money they saved primarily to *contribute to business*, especially after YiA where before 55% used savings and after this increased to 78%. There is no statistical difference between male and female youth. Further qualified in FGDs, before YiA youth described working for their parents, where they did not earn enough, if anything, to cover their basic needs. After YiA, many youth had not only started their own businesses, but their businesses were thriving, allowing some youth to make further investments. For example, a male youth from the Raya Kobo woreda described how he gradually invested and expanded his business: “I started my own work in an animal rearing and fattening business after I joined the Youth in Action program. After a while I started to rent land and work on gardening. Now I am working in three businesses of my own.” YiA youth compared their own reinvestment

¹⁰ In the quantitative tracer studies, youth who reported working were asked how they spend the money they earn, and all youth were asked about their savings practices.

and savings decisions with the decisions of some of their peers not in the YiA program, who they claimed spent all of the money they made in unproductive and unplanned ways.

In Uganda, when asked how they spent the money they earned, a greater percentage of youth reported spending money *contributing to a business* after YiA (76%) than before YiA (52%). Female youth were more likely to report spending money on their business both before and after YiA as shown in Table 7, which may relate to female's responsibilities to household productive activities, as discussed above.

Ugandan youth also reported using their savings primarily to contribute to their business needs. A greater percent of youth reported spending their savings contributing to their business after YiA (80%) than before YiA (64%), however no difference between boys and female youth was identified. Interestingly, more youth said they did not spend their savings after YiA than before (24% versus 11%, respectively). This indicates self-control and delayed gratification for future investments.

	Before YiA (n=314)		After YiA (n=465)	
	Female Youth	Male Youth	Female Youth	Male Youth
Contribute to business	60%	44%***	81%	71%**

** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Table 8. Ugandan female and male youth contributions to business before and after YiA

3.2.3 Applying mixed livelihood strategies to exploit market opportunities

Across the majority of YiA countries, youth were applying mixed livelihood strategies and diversifying their enterprises with additional product, services and/or launching additional enterprises. For instance, when asking youth about the types of work they engaged in

before and after the YiA program, the majority of female and male youth reported on average being engaged in more kinds of work across different sectors after YiA as expressed in Table 8. However, in Ethiopia female youth reported a decrease in the number of kinds of work, where female youth were not concentrated in one activity, the largest being animal rearing.

	Burkina Faso		Egypt		Ethiopia		Uganda	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Before	1.9	1.9	1.1	1.4	1.6	1.5	2.5	2.6
After	2.7	2.4	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.8	2.8	2.8
Change	+42%	+26%	+9%	+7%	-13%	+20%	+12%	+8%

Table 9. Number of kinds of work across sector youth are engaged in by sex and country

Youth in FGDs across Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia also reported engaging in micro- or small enterprises which were uniquely different from their families' businesses; providing new services, specifically agri-based services for their communities; and investing in opportunities for growth. From the Ethiopia qualitative tracer study, youth from Gidan and Habru woredas initially

practiced only 22 different types of income-generating activities. After participating in YiA they were practicing a total of 53 different income-generating activities. The largest increase and difference was found under the category of "trading." In FGDs, youth described why they needed to diversify their sources of income to ensure they maintained a constant source of revenue

because of the seasonality of certain types of work, or the delayed income that came with certain livelihoods such as animal rearing. As one male youth, age 15-18 in Ethiopia explained: *“First I established my own animal rearing business. Then after some time I sold some of the animals and enrolled in a Bajaj [informal 1-2 person taxi] driving skill training center by paying money from my own pocket and I got a driving license. Now I am a Bajaj driver, in addition to the animal rearing business and working for others as a Bajaj driver.”* The ability to identify market opportunities, plan and maintain diversified income generating activities demonstrates youth were gaining, practicing and internalizing self-employment skills and confidence built in YiA to improve their enterprises.

Similar results were also found in Uganda, where youth reported starting businesses to diversify their income, using profits from the enterprises established in YiA. Their diversification strategy was also largely because of seasonal variations; price fluctuations; opportunities available; and what was manageable for them within their family dynamic. In some cases youth also reported diversifying their income to reduce risks such as animal diseases and droughts which lead to low crop yields and scarcity of animal feed, losses from perishable food items, and theft in merchandise. However, diversification strategies in Malawi results were mixed. The majority of youth were working in agriculture production before and after, especially female youth. Some youth diversified their activities, where such diversified activities were observed in villages closer to urban centers with good road and transportation means. Youth in more remote villages continued similar agriculture work, specifically for female youth.

3.3 Self-employment capabilities contribute to positive transformations in female and male youth’s socioeconomic status

Building self-employment capabilities in youth below the age of 18 can be a transformative approach to improve female and male youth’ socio-economic status when coupled with other programmatic inputs (D’Sa et al, 2017). The following findings indicate the strides made in YiA to improve female and male youth’ status, in relation to their self-employment:

1. Female and male youth have improved income and productive assets of youth
2. Female and male youth reported varied improvements in the control and decision-making power of income and productive assets and their enterprise management
3. Female youth’s participation in economic activities has contributed to gender transformations of discriminatory socio-cultural gender norms towards female youth’s work

All of these indicate positive transformations to female and male youth’s economic advancement, as well as their power and agency.

	Burkina Faso*	Egypt	Ethiopia*	Uganda*
Average daily income gain	0.40 USD	0.37 USD	0.98 USD	1.45 USD
% change	+100%	+15%	+45%	+68%

*There were no differences in reported daily income between female and male youth

Table 10. Average daily income gain of youth from before and after YiA by country

3.3.1 Improved business income

The YiA program has had a positive effect on improving youth's income and productive assets through their enterprise ventures. Across all four of the YiA COs who participated in the quantitative tracer studies, varied positive gains were found between youth's daily income from before YiA and at least nine months after YiA, as noted in Table 9.¹¹ This is significant to note, given that daily income gains were not only positive but also sustained over significant periods of time, over nine or more months after YiA.

In Egypt, when disaggregating the data by sex, male youth in Egypt reported higher average daily income than female youth, both before and after YiA. Likewise, there was a positive association between sex (being a male) and gain in income. In sum, although many more female youth reported working after YiA, the gap in income between male and female youth appeared to have grown over time. This gap is evident in looking at the distribution of daily income in Appendix E. A substantial number of male youth reported daily incomes greater than 4 USD – up to 6 and 7 USD per day – both before and after YiA, whereas female youth's reported daily income is between 1 to 3 USD, with a small group of female youth earning between 4 and 5 USD after YiA.¹² While this indicates a continued gender gap, the income female youth earned is significant in changing the attitudes of family members as they were not earning any money nor had the opportunity to earn money before. This is analyzed further in Sub-Finding 3.3 below, when looking at changes in female youth's economic participation in Egypt.

Qualitative analysis of youth FGDs further confirmed youth had achieved considerable success in their income generation. Youth went from primarily working for and depending on their families to owning their own businesses whose net income was sufficient to cover most of their basic needs such as food and clothing. Improvements were also found in youth who had increased their productive assets. An Ethiopian youth

in the Habru woreda expanded his transportation business from one camel to two camels, both of which are owned by him. A female from Gidan woreda stated that when she started YiA and began to rear sheep she only had three sheep but now she was in possession of eight sheep.

In Malawi, youth also expressed major changes in their socio-economic status. Prior to YiA, female and male youth participated in unsecure work, where there were minimal opportunities for growth, experience-building skills development. The average income youth reported was 1 USD to 3 USD, however this was not guaranteed every day. After graduating from YiA, almost all female and male youth who participated in the study were able to start a micro-enterprise, and indicated their income had increased. Male youth, in particular, said they were now able to earn \$150 a month in some cases. Female youth's income did not increase as much, but they did report increases in productive assets for ongoing livelihood development. Most youth were able to buy new assets in the last year, such as goats, pigs and bicycles.

In the case of Uganda, it is important to note that 24% of youth reported earning less after YiA, indicating that not all youth have been successful in their enterprise developments over time. As noted above in Sub-Finding 1.2, for the Uganda tracer study, an analysis was also conducted to look at the different pathway options – specifically enterprise, vocational, and apprenticeship – and the association between the pathway chosen and youth's reported outcomes. Youth who participated in the apprenticeship pathway reported slightly smaller gains in daily income than youth who completed the enterprise pathway. This suggests that while the vocational training and apprenticeship pathways can support youth's entrepreneurial mindset and self-employment capability building, programming centred on enterprise development may yield more successful returns for youth's economic advancement in the Uganda context.

¹¹ In Burkina Faso, Egypt and Ethiopia, to determine self-reported gains in income, the sample was restricted to include only those youth who worked both before and after YiA (Burkina Faso n=62, Egypt n=141, Ethiopia n=160). It should be noted that the income data was limited in terms of precision and the extent to which they were representative of the population of youth who participated in YiA. This is because the data relied on youth recall, without attempting to verify self-reported income. Likewise, the inflation adjustments were based on the average annual inflation rate, which means YiA cannot account for monthly/weekly fluctuations. Finally, data on gains in income was only for about 30% of the sample, since only about 30% worked before YiA.

¹² It should be noted that the income data are limited in terms of precision and the extent to which they are representative of the population of youth who participated in YiA. This is because we rely on youth recall, without attempting to verify self-reported income. Likewise, the inflation adjustments are based on the average annual inflation rate, which means we cannot account for monthly/weekly fluctuations. Finally, we only have data on gains in income for about 30% of the sample, since only about 30% worked before YiA.

3.3.2 Varied improvements in business control and economic decision-making power

A second effect of building self-employment capabilities in youth was the improvements seen on youth's autonomy in economic decision-making. In the quantitative tracer studies, youth were asked a series of questions regarding the extent to which youth had a say in key decisions regarding how they earn and what they do with their money. Specifically, youth were asked: "Who decides: 1) the kind of work you

do, 2) how to spend the money you earn, 3) where you save your money, and 4) how to spend the money you save?" Youth could respond "I decide" or "someone else decides." An index ranging from zero (no say in economic decisions) to four (youth make all decisions) was designed to test the significance of the overall change in autonomy before and after YiA. Across all four countries, youth reported increases in their decisions on the autonomy scale as indicated in Table 10.¹³

	Burkina Faso*		Egypt		Ethiopia		Uganda*	
Youth decides...	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
the kind of work s/he would do	19%	51%	24%	71%	39%	87%	37%	73%
how to spend money	24%	61%	24%	71%	38%	90%	38%	74%
where to save	28%	34%	29%	61%	23%	89%	32%	73%
how to spend saved money	31%	56%	29%	59%	27%	90%	34%	78%
Number of decisions made by youth (out of 4)	1.0	2.0	1.1	2.6	1.3	3.6	1.4	3.0
% change	+100%		+136%		+177%		+114%	

*There were no differences in decision-making power between female and male youth

Table 11. Autonomy in economic decision-making by country

When sex disaggregating the data, in Egypt, before YiA, male youth had more autonomy in economic decision-making than female youth (males made 1-2 decisions, compared to less than 1 for females). Remarkably, female youth reported greater gains in autonomy, and as a result the tracer revealed no gap in autonomy between male and female youth after YiA. For Ethiopian youth, prior to YiA there was no difference in autonomy between male and female youth. After YiA, male youth reported greater autonomy than female youth, although this difference is small in magnitude, less than .5 decisions. In Burkina Faso and Uganda no differences were observed in autonomy between female and male youth.

Improved decision-making power is also indicated in the Ethiopia qualitative tracer study, where youth explained that before YiA they tended to depend on their families and friends to help them make decisions.

After YiA, youth described how they were now making decision for themselves, using their self-employment skills to assess and pursue different enterprise opportunities. They attributed YiA for giving them the confidence to make decisions independently using the skills they had developed in the program. They also attributed YiA to helping them build family trust in their decision-making ability and attract family attention to their livelihood goals. Many youth respondents explained the family celebration YiA organized at the end of the 'My Family' module helped to convince their parents to support them in the enterprises they chose. Youth reported this event encouraged parents to help them lead their livelihood choices. Some youth also described how they independently decided to change their enterprises activities, if not viable or not yielding immediate returns.

¹³ This increase can also be explained in part by the finding that more youth are working and saving after having participated in YiA, and thus have more economic and livelihoods decisions to be making.

Despite these positive improvements to youth's autonomy for their enterprises' finances and operations, it is important to note that youth's livelihood decisions were still heavily influenced by family members, specifically for female youth. The majority of female youth required family permission before selecting a livelihood pathway to pursue and while it was a consultative process in most cases, there were some cases where family members – husbands, fathers, brothers or fiancés dictated what type of business female youth pursued.

In the Malawi qualitative tracer study, specific attention was focused on if and how the decision-making processes changed for youth before and after YiA. Overall, the study indicated youth were leading business, financial and personal decisions on their own; however, for female youth there continued to be challenges due to discriminatory socio-cultural traditions and norms.

Decision-making power in the Malawi context

Financial Decisions: Before joining YiA, youth were not making financial decisions. They worked to earn money to help their families, where all financial decisions were made by heads of households. After YiA, youth expressed considerable improvements in their power to make decisions regarding their money earned. They decided how to spend it and how to save it. The first decision they made was regarding the grant given to them by YiA where youth decided for themselves how the money was used, particularly male youth. Female youth were more likely to have their family involved in these decisions, but felt the decision-making process was positive and consultative. Youth also indicated support from mentors, which helped them decide what to buy and from where to start their project.

Business Decisions: Before YiA, youth were solely looking for any kind of work in their communities to earn money for their families with no longer term goals or objectives. After YiA, youth developed life plans largely on their own terms, however females had to involve and get family buy-in in the decisions they wanted to pursue. In the FGDs, male youth reported choosing activities based on skills they learned through YiA and from their mentors, and families were supportive of these choices. Female youth pursued enterprises which were supported by someone that their family knew, and it was clear that YiA was not very successful at diversifying the types of activities that female youth chose to do. Most female youth were married after the program and had children right away, thus it was not clear if they were able to keep and grow their enterprises started in YiA long term. Male youth were also not able to make decisions to move to the nearest urban/peri-urban center for work, as families were against this due to concerns of leaving the community and safety.

Personal Decisions: Early marriage and pregnancy has remained a challenge for female youth in YiA. In FGDs, female youth expressed that this decision was more or less made by their families and influenced by the community. YiA, unfortunately, did not improve their ability to make their own personal decisions regarding when and who to marry and when to have children. However, for decisions about money and business, they were able to make these decisions more on their own without involving others. Male youth, on the other hand, had more freedom and generally expressed that they are making their own personal decisions, which was the case both before and after YiA. From this study, this shows that while YiA made efforts in this area, the program was unable to change critical socio-cultural norms in the Malawi context which impact female youth's economic opportunities.

3.3.3 Positive gender transformations in family and community perceptions support on female youth's economic participation

Despite the Malawi case study, there are indications that building self-employment capabilities can

contribute to positive gender transformations in female youth's economic opportunities and strengthen their proximal enabling proximal environments. The YiA Egypt SUPER study focused particularly on this research topic to analyze if and how barriers to female youth's economic opportunities, specifically related

to family and community members' attitudes, were being reduced. In the case of Egypt, the opportunity to build self-employment capabilities – learning key skills, behaviors and attitudes as well as establishing micro- or small enterprises to practice skills and earn an income – had shifted families' perceptions and attitudes on the status and position of female youth in the family and community; proving that female youth can be successful business owners.

In Egypt, parents often have their daughters married as early as possible to reduce the number of dependents in the home. However, as female youth are now earning money in the YiA, they are perceived as an asset to the family. As one father in Al Sharqia asserted: *"Our girls turned from takers to givers."* This demonstrated how female youth' new status as income earners in the family has contributed to a change in how families see them. In the Egypt SUPER study, 93% of females and 97% of males agreed or strongly agreed that because of their participation in YiA, their family is more supportive of the work they want to do. Parents not only increased their support of youth's livelihood pathways, but some also worked to promote gender equity in youth's ability to pursue enterprises. For example, some parents said they supported their daughters more than their sons, because unlike a male youth who is able to find additional work, a daughter is unable to work outside the home due to mobility limitations. In order to assist their daughters' businesses, families volunteered their labor and provided financial support when needed, which they had not provided before. Youth also reported that their participation in YiA enabled them to have a voice in family decision-making. Before YiA, youth explained reluctance to join family discussions, but now feel more confident to participate, where 96% of males and 96% of females agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "because of my participation in YiA, my family includes me in decision making."

Furthermore, youth and parents described how community members are now supportive of female youth owning a small business by helping in their expansion. For example, in Al Sharqia, female youth explained: *"neighbours are the ones who suggested that [they] start a cleaning supplies business because it is something that is not available in the neighborhood."* Community members would become clients for these

female youth" businesses as long as their prices were competitive. Community support for female youth's businesses helped to elevate the status of female youth in the community. In addition, by receiving encouragement and support from the community, female youth expressed further boosts in their self-confidence.

In Egypt, physical mobility is a major barrier for female youth' participation in the YiA program, as well as to develop an enterprise. A female participant from Assiut recounted how before YiA female youth were not allowed to leave the house, but are now allowed to leave to attend the YiA program and to make purchases for their businesses. In the Egypt SUPER study, 84% of males and 69% of female respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Because of my participation in YiA, my family is more willing to let me work outside the home." Building self-employment capabilities and female youth' ownership and leadership in business can influence the general acceptability of female youth' mobility. Despite these progresses, mobility is still a challenge, where female youth respondents in FGDs indicated all enterprises owned by female graduates were home-based due to restrictions on their movement. Limited mobility also has other implications for youth's economic development, where they have fewer avenues to raise capital doing outside work.

It is important to note, that such positive transformations can be attributed to self-employment capabilities, but also the other wrap-around support, services and activities of YiA, such as mentorship, the cash grant, literacy and numeracy development, sex education and early marriage discussions, etc. In addition, there are still many discriminatory socio-cultural norms which female youth face across all countries. YiA has not managed to remove all barriers and there continues to be gender gaps related to youth's income levels and self-employment capabilities in some country cases; however, it is recognized that addressing such barriers is a long term process. It can be observed that YiA has shaped current and future economic opportunities for female youth and begin to positively shift the mindset and attitudes of family members and communities, which would not have been possible without YiA.

Conclusion

4.1 Summary of Findings

The findings indicate that there have been significant improvements to YiA youth's self-employment capabilities. This specifically relates to improving youth's entrepreneurial mindsets, specifically related to building a positive self-concept and self-confidence in young people's business pursuits. Youth also improved their market analytical, business planning and financial management skills to equip them with the strategies to pursue enterprise opportunities in their local market.

YiA saw participants actively apply their self-employment skills to improve livelihood outcomes through the development and sustaining of enterprises at least nine months after they graduated from the program. Youth also demonstrated applying their self-employment skills by changing their spending and saving behaviors to reinvest and expand their enterprises, as well as diversifying their income-generating opportunities to take advantage of seasonal opportunities and/or develop higher value products and services along local agri-based value chains.

YiA is recognized for reaching one of the hardest to reach and most deprived target populations – working with out-of-school rural youth ages 12-18, who live outside key systems and services. This narrative highlights the value of building relevant, youth-friendly self-employment capabilities for this target group as a critical first step to engage in market systems and creative positive pathways of change. Through building self-employment capabilities, the program has seen significant increases in youth's business income and shifting youth along the self-employment continuum, from constrained self-employment to creating more community-integrated vocational self-employment opportunities; however, the enterprises youth establish are still at a very micro-scale and considered part of rural economies' constrained self-employment. This is not necessarily a negative thing, when looking at the reality of what success can be for a young person between the ages of 12-18. Developing self-employment capabilities and pursuing a micro-enterprise in a supportive, gender-transformative environment, with

key wrap-around services, is a valuable first step in youth's transition to successful decent work and a critical activity to improve young people's socio-economic status.

Strengthening youth's self-employment capabilities is found to be one aspect which contributes to positive shifts in youth's business control and decision-making power, and transforming family and community attitudes of female youth's status and economic participation. However discriminatory socio-cultural norms and customs still influence youth's, specifically female youth's, economic opportunities. Self-employment capabilities is one key component to youth economic empowerment, however it is not a standalone piece and should be integrated into a holistic model, focused on improving youth's overall well-being, including positively transforming the relations and spheres of influence across a young person's life.

4.2 Next Steps and Recommendations

From this learning narrative, key considerations when developing self-employment capabilities in future youth livelihood programming include:

Reaching the most deprived youth below 18 years of ages: Continued investment targeting the most deprived youth between the ages of 12-18 is essential to create initial economic first steps and self-employment opportunities for youth, especially given the expanding youth bulge. As this learning narrative indicates, such programming can positively shape their current and future life status. Adolescence is a pivotal and formative stage in life, especially for youth living in poverty where they are leaving school, entering the labor force, transitioning into early marriage and parenthood. This is also a stage where gender norms and identity are formed and gender gaps typically widen, where adolescent female youth end up disproportionately marginalized and vulnerable, especially given the expanding youth bulge.

Holistic, contextualized and gender-transformative youth development model: To build self-employment capabilities requires a

comprehensive and integrated approach to adolescent and youth development. As this learning narrative indicates, all aspects of the *Learning for Life* curriculum was pivotal in supporting youth's entrepreneurial mindset, essential business skills, and in providing opportunities to practice and further develop self-employment capabilities, with key wrap-around services to support young people's enterprise incubation customized to the local market. This also involves continued research and gender analysis to understand the gender-based barriers which limit youth's economic opportunities and participation, specifically for female youth, and develop strategies which specifically work to address discriminatory socio-cultural norms and behaviors against female youth, such as limited mobility, early marriage, early pregnancy, domestic responsibilities and sexual and gender-based violence.

Practice-based learning and building a supportive and gender-sensitive learning environment: One key aspect of building self-employment capabilities highlighted in the YiA model design is the importance of creating practice-based opportunities for young people to apply their skills, where youth are given time and support to put their plans into action, such as the YiA pathway model. It is critical to shift away from theoretical learning programs and focus on relevant and activity-based experiential learning, through youth-friendly and participatory methodologies, such as storytelling, games, simulation, hands-on work, discussions and coaching. As part of building a supportive and gender-sensitive learning environment, this requires providing ongoing capacity-building to a gender-balance of local facilitators and mentors to support in young people's self-employment capabilities development and act as role models. Ongoing family and community engagement to recruit target youth and support their learning and livelihood pursuits is key to success

Mixed and diversified livelihood strategies: When designing self-employment programs for rural youth, it is critical to ensure mixed enterprise options and seasonal analysis are considered and planned for in curricular resources, business planning, and enterprise development services. This requires more flexible understanding of work outcomes and enterprise success, in terms of start-up rates and status of sustaining a business over the long-term. In rural contexts, adolescent youth will likely be involved

in various value chains, where agriculture may be a starting point, however they need flexible learning and practice-based opportunities to support diversification strategies.

Complementary investments in contextualized rural market systems and structures for youth: To build inclusive economic growth solutions requires a portfolio of complementary programs which cater to small, medium and large economic actors and enterprise development processes, including strengthening government and institutional frameworks. There is no one-program or one-target group solution and this requires a series of aligned context-specific programs and strategies with various civil-society actors. Attention to adolescent and youth and their foundational skill development is critical; however, additional investment is also required to focus on rural market structures and strengthen economic sectors at national and regional levels to shift youth out of constrained self-employment and into diversified and sustainable livelihood opportunities.



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Appendix A:

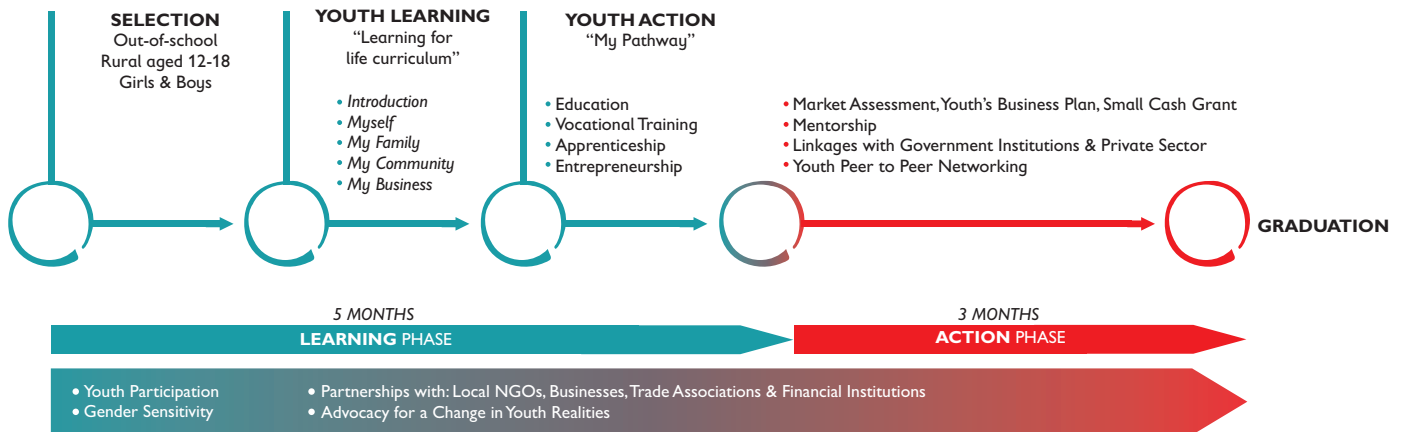


Figure 4: Youth in Action Program Model

Appendix B:

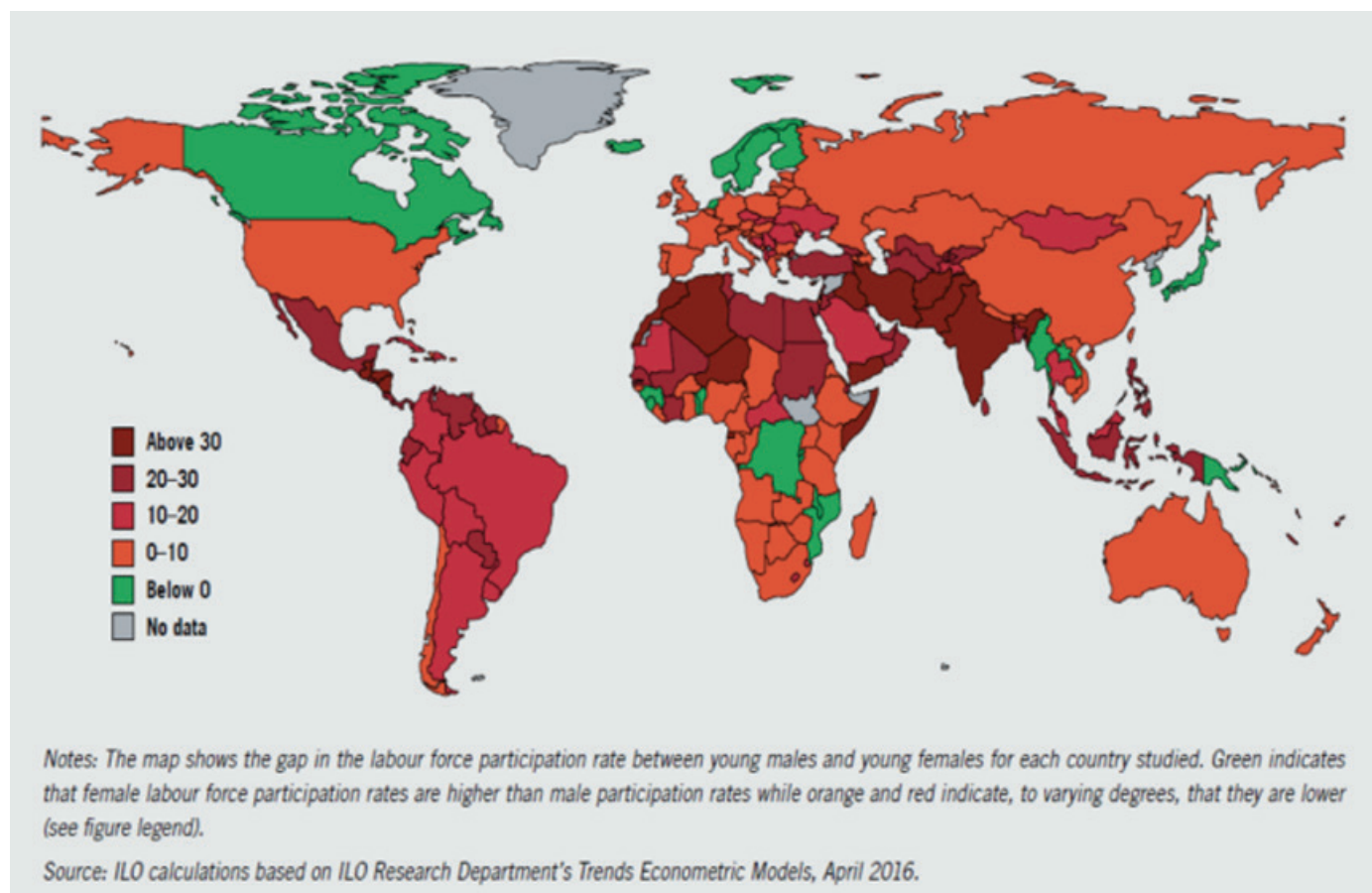


Figure 5: Gender gaps in youth labour force participation rates, 2016 (percentage points, male-female)

Appendix C:

	Before YiA		After YiA	
	Female Youth (n=29)	Male Youth (n=55)	Female Youth (n=67)	Male Youth (n=105)
Youth own a business ¹⁴	66%	64%	90%	88%
Agriculture	59%	80%*	61%	79%*
Trading agriculture	24%	20%	22%	22%
Animal rearing	10%	29%	64%	67%
Animal trading	7%	16%	28%	28%
Automotive	0%	4%	0%	5%
Construction	0%	4%	0%	1%
Cosmetology	3%	2%	6%	3%
Domestic	7%	2%	22%	6%**
Electric	3%	0%	1%	1%
Garments	0%	2%	3%	6%
Mining	0%	9%	0%	7%*
Sales	21%	13%	28%	9%***
Transport	0%	2%	0%	2%
Trade in phytosanitary products	24%	0%***	9%	1%**
Catering	10%	5%	19%	5%**
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%
Number of kinds of work	1.9	1.9	2.7	2.4

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Table 12. Burkina Faso – Types of work youth engaged in before and after YiA, by sex

	Before YiA		After YiA	
	Female Youth (n=33)	Male Youth (n=125)	Female Youth (n=212)	Male Youth (n=213)
Youth owned a business	9%	14%	97%	81%***
Agriculture	39%	28%	4%	23%***
Garments	21%	2%***	22%	2%***
Food enterprises	18%	10%	3%	12%***
Sales	15%	8%	26%	11%***
Other	9%	8%	4%	7%
Trading agriculture	0%	2%	3%	2%
Animal rearing	0%	9%	43%	38%
Animal trading	0%	2%	8%	6%
Automotive	0%	8%	0%	4%**
Construction	0%	49%***	0%	31%***
Cosmetology	0%	2%	1%	3%
Domestic	0%	0%	1%	0%
Electric	0%	5%	0%	4%*
Mining	0%	1%	0%	1%
Transport	0%	10%	1%	10%***
Number of kinds of work before YiA	1.1	1.4**	1.2	1.5***

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Table 13. Egypt –Types of work youth engaged in before and after YiA, by sex

¹⁴ Percent who own a business in Table 4 corresponds to the percent of youth who are reported working before and after YiA who own a business, not the total percent of youth who own a business. Owning a business is not considered in the total number of types of work.

Appendix C:

	Before YiA		After YiA	
	Female Youth (n=71)	Male Youth (n=112)	Female Youth (n=172)	Male Youth (n=194)
Youth owned a business	59%	54%	94%	91%
Agriculture	44%	63%***	32%	51%
Animal rearing	33%	39%	57%	64%
Trading agriculture	25%	4%***	13%	5%**
Domestic	14%	0%***	3%	1%*
Sales	7%	3%	9%	3%*
Garments	5%	1%	3%	1%
Animal trading	2%	22%***	7%	31%***
Construction	2%	9%	0%	5%**
Cosmetology	2%	1%	2%	3%
Electric	1%	0%	1%	0%
Transport	1%	3%	0%	3%*
Automotive	0%	1%	1%	1%
Mining	0%	0%	0%	1%
Other	19%	13%	16%	18%
Number of kinds of work	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.8***

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Table 14. Ethiopia – Types of work youth engaged in before and after YiA, by sex

	Before YiA		After YiA	
	Female Youth (n=153)	Male Youth (n=161)	Female Youth (n=230)	Male Youth (n=235)
Youth owned a business	76%	50%***	93%	77%***
Agriculture	82%	83%	74%	68%
Trading agriculture	56%	32%***	68%	48%***
Animal rearing	28%	34%	51%	41%*
Animal trading	11%	12%	15%	19%
Automotive	1%	3%	1%	6%**
Construction	2%	27%***	0%	24%***
Cosmetology	4%	11%*	5%	8%
Domestic	22%	19%	23%	19%
Electric	1%	1%	0%	47%**
Garments	2%	1%	6%	2%*
Mining	1%	1%	0%	1%
Sales	29%	23%***	30%	17%***
Transport	0%	8%***	0%	9%***
Other	11%	19%*	12%	13%
Number of kinds of work	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.8

* $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

Table 15. Uganda – Types of work youth engaged in before and after YiA, by sex

Appendix D:

	Sample Size & Date				
Data Source	Burkina Faso	Ethiopia	Egypt	Malawi	Uganda
Program Outcomes Study		624 youth (292F / 332M) November, 2017	798 youth (439F / 359M) November, 2017	579 youth (255F / 324M) January, 2018	688 youth (395F / 293M) August, 2017
Quantitative Tracer Study	204 youth (81F / 123M) November, 2017	382 youth (185F / 197M) November, 2017	487 youth (251F / 236M) November, 2017		494 youth (244 F / 250 M) November, 2017
Qualitative Tracer Studies		154 youth (69F / 85M) September, 2017		186 youth (95F / 91M) November, 2017	49 youth (24F / 25M) November, 2017
SUPER & Cross-Country Exchange Studies	132 youth (61F / 71M); 113 family and community stakeholders (42F / 71M) August, 2016	97 youth (46F / 51M) November, 2016	400 youth (200F / 200M); 60 family and community stakeholders (30F / 30M) November, 2017		43 youth (18F / 25M) 77 family and community stakeholders (33F / 44M) December, 2016

Table 16. Data Source Sample Size & Date

Appendix E:

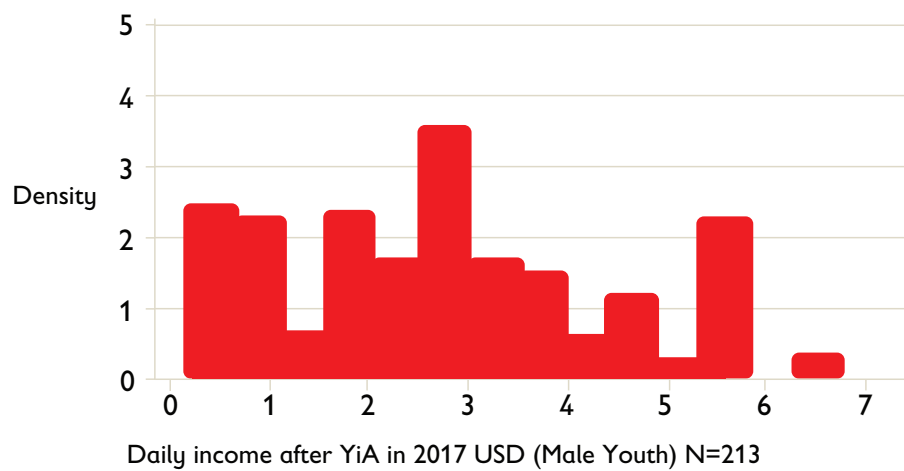
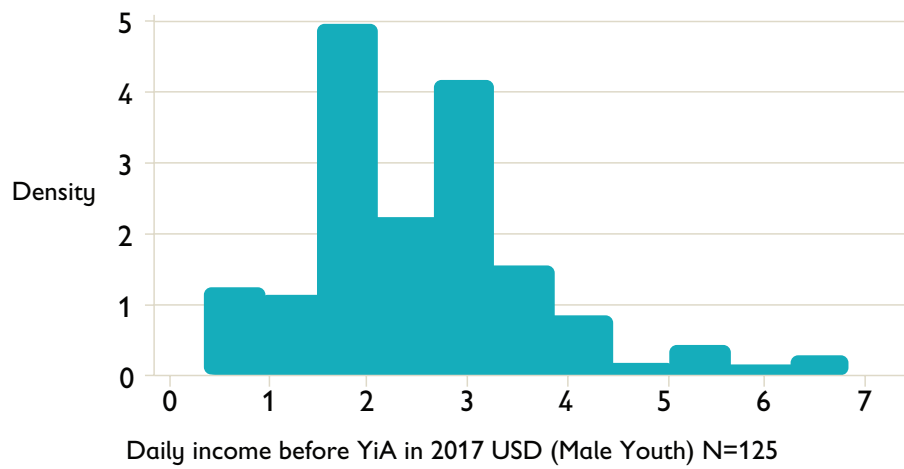


Figure 4. Distribution of reported daily income in Egypt before and after YiA in USD

LEARNING NARRATIVE

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